

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system, comprising:
  - a fuel dispenser position; and
  - a video camera-recorder combination operatively associated  
5 with said fuel dispenser position;
  - said video camera-recorder combination being configured to acquire and record at least one video signal comprising at least one of a dispenser user image and a user vehicle image.
2. The system as recited in Claim 1, wherein said video camera-recorder combination being configured further to operate in response to a signal indicating authorization of a transaction pertaining to the dispenser user.
3. The system as recited in Claim 1, wherein said video camera-recorder combination being configured further to operate automatically in response to a signal indicating the presence of a vehicle in association with said fuel dispenser position.
4. The system as recited in Claim 1, wherein said video camera-recorder combination includes a camcorder.
5. The system as recited in Claim 1, further comprises:
  - a network connection operatively coupled to said video camera-recorder combination.
6. The system as recited in Claim 5, wherein said network connection being configured for connection to at least one of the Internet and World Wide Web.

7. The system as recited in Claim 1, wherein said video camera-recorder combination being housed within a fuel dispenser terminal at said fuel dispenser position.

8. The system as recited in Claim 1, wherein said video camera-recorder combination being configured further to record over any previously recorded video portions in the absence of a signal indicative of a drive-off event pertaining to the

5 previously recorded video portions.

9. The system as recited in Claim 1, wherein said video camera-recorder combination being configured further to provide a still image, a series of images, a moving image, a full-motion video sequence, or a combination thereof.

10. The system as recited in Claim 1, further comprises:

a means, responsive to a signal indicative of the occurrence of a non-payment drive-off event, for providing a record of the drive-off event occurrence using at least one video signal

5 operatively recorded by said video camera-recorder combination.

11. A system for use in a refueling environment having a fuel dispenser position, said system comprising:

a surveillance camera operatively associated with said fuel dispenser position, said surveillance camera being configured to

5 operatively collect at least one image pertaining to said fuel dispenser position; and

a controller operatively associated with said surveillance camera, said controller being configured to direct operation of said surveillance camera in response to a signal indicative of a 10 trigger event.

12. The system as recited in Claim 11, wherein said surveillance camera being configured further to operatively collect at least one image comprising at least one of a dispenser user image and a user vehicle image.

13. The system as recited in Claim 11, wherein said trigger event relating to authorization of a transaction pertaining to a dispenser user.

14. The system as recited in Claim 11, further comprises:  
a recordation apparatus configured to operatively record images provided by said surveillance camera.

15. The system as recited in Claim 14, further comprises:  
a means, responsive to a signal indicative of the occurrence of a non-payment drive-off event, for providing a record of the drive-off event occurrence using at least one image operatively recorded by said recordation apparatus.

16. The system as recited in Claim 14, wherein said surveillance camera and said recordation apparatus together form a camcorder unit.

17. The system as recited in Claim 14, further comprises:

a network connection operatively coupled to said recordation apparatus.

18. The system as recited in Claim 17, wherein said network connection being configured for connection to at least one of the Internet and World Wide Web.

19. The system as recited in Claim 14, further comprises:

a remote facility disposed apart from said refueling environment;

a communications link between said refueling environment and  
5 said remote facility; and

a means to cause recorded images from said recordation apparatus to be operatively communicated to said remote facility over said communications link.

20. The system as recited in Claim 11, further comprises:

a remote facility disposed apart from said refueling environment;

a communications link between said refueling environment and  
5 said remote facility; and

a means to cause collected images from said surveillance camera to be operatively communicated to said remote facility over said communications link.

21. A system for use in a refueling environment having a fuel dispenser position, said system comprising:

a first means for operatively collecting at least one image relating to said fuel dispenser position;

5        a second means for operatively recording images collected by said first means; and

      a third means for controlling operation of said first means and/or said second means.

22. The system as recited in Claim 21, wherein said third means also for activating said first means in response to a signal indicative of a trigger event.

23. The system as recited in Claim 22, wherein said trigger event relating to authorization of a transaction pertaining to a dispenser user.

24. The system as recited in Claim 22, wherein said trigger event signal issuing from a point-of-sale (POS) facility in said refueling environment.

25. The system as recited in Claim 21, wherein said first means and said second means together defining a video camera-recorder combination.

26. The system as recited in Claim 21, further comprises:

      a fourth means, responsive to a signal indicative of the occurrence of a non-payment drive-off event, for providing a record of the drive-off event occurrence using at least one image recorded by said second means.

27. The system as recited in Claim 21, further comprises:

a network; and  
a fifth means for causing recorded images from said second means to be placed onto said network.

28. The system as recited in Claim 27, wherein said network includes the Internet and/or the World Wide Web.

29. The system as recited in Claim 21, wherein said first means also for operatively collecting at least one image relating to a dispenser user and/or a user vehicle.

30. An apparatus for use in a refueling environment having a fuel dispenser position, said apparatus comprising:

    a surveillance system including a video camera and a video recording device;

5      said video camera being disposed proximate said fuel dispenser position;

    said video recording device being operatively coupled to said video camera; and

    a controller to control said surveillance system.

31. The apparatus as recited in Claim 30, wherein said controller being configured to activate said surveillance system in response to a signal indicating approval of a transaction pertaining to a dispenser user.

32. The apparatus as recited in Claim 30, further comprises:

a point-of-sale (POS) facility in said refueling environment, said POS facility operatively coupled to said controller.

33. The apparatus as recited in Claim 30, wherein said video camera being configured to collect at least one image relating to a dispenser user and/or a user vehicle.

34. The apparatus as recited in Claim 30, further comprises:  
a network connection operatively coupled to said surveillance system.

35. The apparatus as recited in Claim 30, further comprises:

a detector to detect occurrence of a non-payment drive-off event; and  
a recordation facility operatively coupled to said detector  
5 and said surveillance system.

36. The apparatus as recited in Claim 35, wherein said recordation facility being configured to generate a record using recorded images from said video recording device, in response to a signal from said detector indicative of a detected drive-off  
5 event.

37. The apparatus as recited in Claim 30, further comprises:  
a remote facility disposed apart from said refueling environment; and  
a communications link between said surveillance system and  
5 said remote facility.

38. A method for use in a refueling environment having a fuel dispenser position, said method comprising the steps of:  
acquiring at least one image associated with said fuel dispenser position, following the occurrence of a trigger event;  
5 and  
recording any acquired images.

39. The method as recited in Claim 38, wherein said trigger event corresponding to authorization of a transaction pertaining to a dispenser user.

40. The method as recited in Claim 38, wherein said image acquisition step further comprises the step of:

acquiring at least one image relating to a dispenser user and/or a user vehicle.

41. The method as recited in Claim 38, further comprises the steps of:

determining whether a non-payment drive-off event has occurred in relation to a dispenser user; and

5 associating a drive-off event occurrence with the recorded images, in response to a determination of the drive-off event occurrence.

42. The method as recited in Claim 41, wherein said association step further comprises the step of:

providing a record of the drive-off event occurrence using the recorded images.

43. The method as recited in Claim 38, further comprises the steps of:

providing a network; and  
communicating the recorded images to and over said network.

44. The method as recited in Claim 43, wherein said network includes the Internet and/or World Wide Web.

45. The method as recited in Claim 38, wherein said image acquisition step further comprises the steps of:

providing a video camera; and  
controlling operation of said video camera, in response to a signal issuing from a point-of-sale (POS) facility in said refueling environment indicating approval of a transaction pertaining to a dispenser user.

46. A method for use in a refueling environment having a fuel dispenser position, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a video camera configured to enable the collection of at least one image associated with said fuel dispenser position; and

operating said video camera, in response to the occurrence of a trigger event.

47. The method as recited in Claim 46, further comprises the step of:

recording images collected by said video camera.

48. The method as recited in Claim 47, further comprises the steps of:

determining if a non-payment drive-off event has occurred;

and

5 following a determination of the occurrence of a non-payment drive-off event, providing a record of the drive-off event occurrence using at least one recorded image.

49. The method as recited in Claim 46, wherein said trigger event corresponding to authorization of a transaction pertaining to a dispenser user.

50. The method as recited in Claim 46, wherein said video camera being configured further to enable the collection of at least one image relating to a dispenser user and/or a user vehicle.

51. A method for use in a refueling environment having a fuel dispenser position, said method comprising the steps of:

collecting at least one image relating to a dispenser user and/or a user vehicle, following approval of a transaction  
5 pertaining to the dispenser user; and

recording the collected images.

52. The method as recited in Claim 51, further comprises the steps of:

determining whether a non-payment drive-off event has occurred in relation to the dispenser user; and

5 associating a drive-off event occurrence with the recorded images, in response to a determination of the drive-off event occurrence.

53. The method as recited in Claim 52, wherein said association step further comprises the step of:

providing a record of the drive-off event occurrence using the recorded images.

54. The method as recited in Claim 51, further comprises the steps of:

providing a network; and

communicating the recorded images to and over said network.

55. The method as recited in Claim 54, wherein said network includes a packet-based data network.

56. The method as recited in Claim 51, wherein said image collection step further comprises the steps of:

providing a video camera; and

controlling operation of said video camera, in response to a

5 signal issuing from a point-of-sale (POS) facility in said refueling environment representing the dispenser user transaction approval.